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VIRULENT SMALLPOX, NEW BEDFORD, MASS.

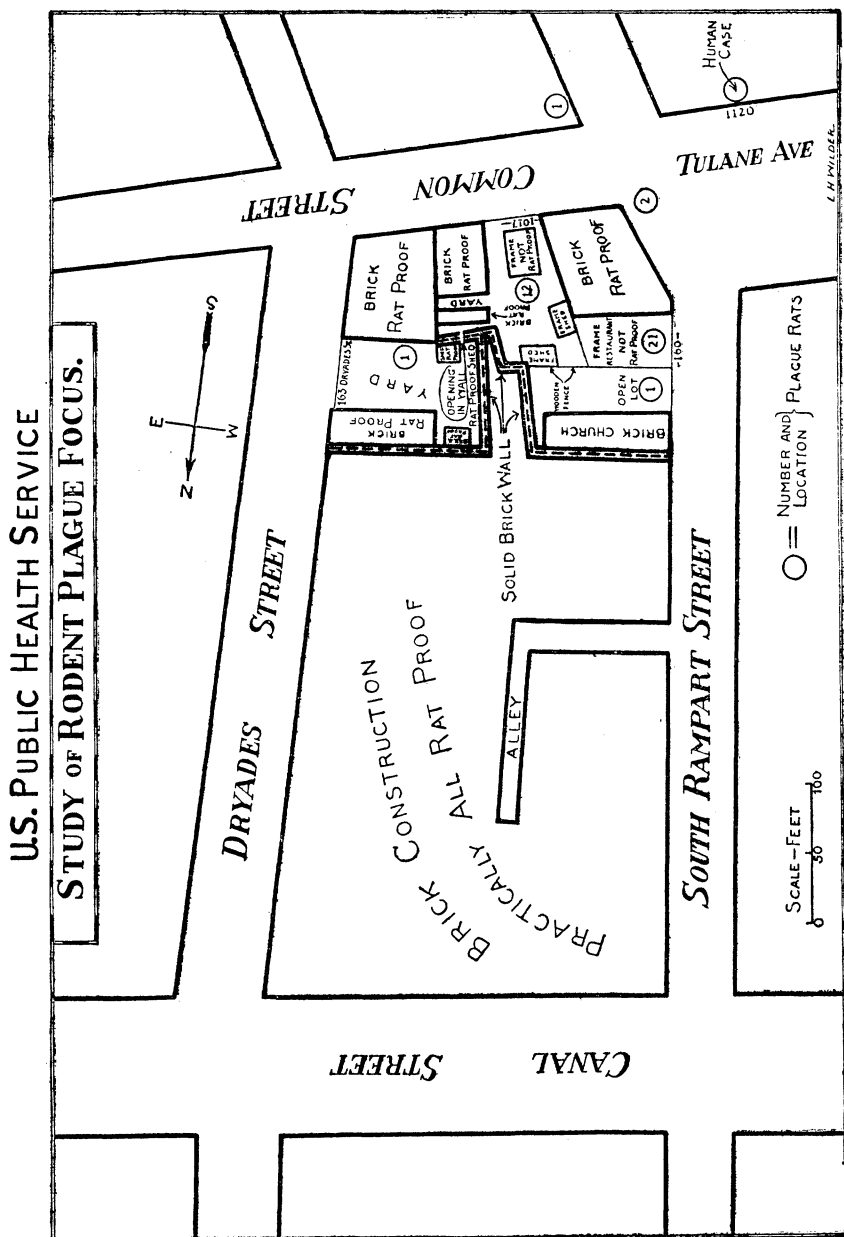
There is at present an outbreak of virulent smallpox at New Bedford, Mass. Since May 15, there have been 10 cases, of which 3 have terminated fatally. Four of the cases have been of the hemorrhagic type.

NOTE ON A RODENT PLAGUE FOCUS.

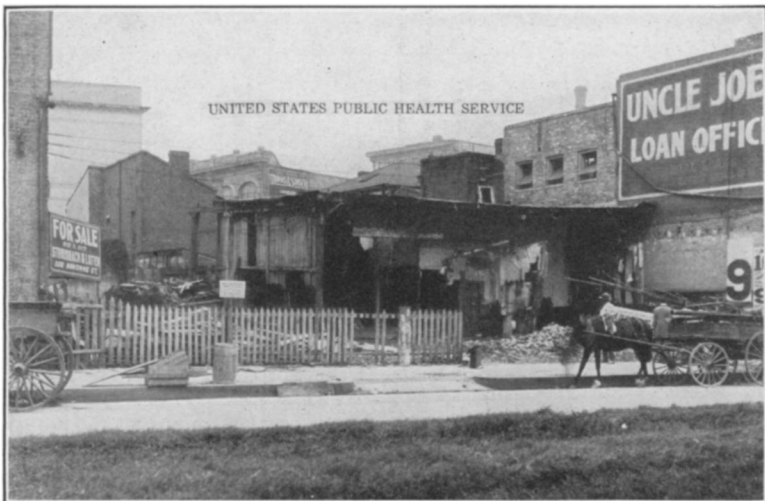
By W. C. RUCKER, Assistant Surgeon General, United States Public Health Service.

On September 11, 1914, a female *Mus norvegicus* was found dead on the street at the corner of Common and South Rampart Streets in the city of New Orleans. A laboratory examination of this rat proved it plague infected. As it was not altogether improbable that the dead rat had been thrown into the street by some person living or working in the neighborhood, an intensive search was made to determine its origin. On September 16 an infected female *Mus norvegicus* was found at 160 South Rampart Street, a Chinese restaurant, located in a ramshackle frame building between a rat-proof brick building and an open lot. On the other side of the open lot was a brick church. With the exception of a few openings into the gratings underneath the church, this was also rat proof. Directly back of the restaurant was a frame shed. On the same lot with this shed were another shed and a frame cottage. None of these buildings was rat proof. Back of the church was a brick wall which extended irregularly toward Common Street and finally met the corner of a brick rat-proof building. There was only one opening through this wall. This led to the premises at 163 Dryades Street. In the clean-up operations which followed, 38 infected rats were taken. All of these were *Mus norvegicus*, 10 being males and 28 females. Of 135 rats secured in cleaning up this focus 113 were found dead; 2 infected rats were found on the corner of Common and South Rampart Streets, 21 in the Chinese restaurant at 160 South Rampart Street, 1 in the open lot next to it, 12 on the premises at 1017 Common Street, 1 at 163 Dryades Street, and 1 at 200 South Rampart Street.

It is interesting to inquire why plague rats were not found in the remainder of the block and why this focus was not more widespread. The square in which the focus was found is bounded by Common



Street, Dryades Street, Canal Street, and Rampart Street. It is in the heart of New Orleans. The population of the block is cosmopolitan. Practically all of the block, with the exception of the



PREMISES AT 160 SOUTH RAMPART STREET UNDERGOING DEMOLITION.



PREMISES AT 160 SOUTH RAMPART STREET. AFTER ERECTION OF RAT-PROOF STRUCTURE.

premises at 160 South Rampart Street and 1017 Common Street, is rat proof. Beginning at the corner of the church there is a brick wall which extends entirely across the block. This has no opening. Therefore, ground rats could not leave the focus without entering the street, and since there was an ample food supply at the Chinese restaurant there was no necessity for their so doing. Had this been a focus in which *Mus rattus* or *Mus alexandrinus*, i. e. climbing rats, abounded, there would have been greater opportunity for their leaving the original zone, but being ground rats they were hemmed in by the brick walls, and since the exterminative operations were intense they had little opportunity to cross the streets.

When the heavily infected focus was discovered, the building at 160 South Rampart Street was torn down. The frame sheds behind it were rendered noninhabitable for rats. The flooring at 1017 South Rampart Street was taken up, as were also the wooden sidewalks.

In these operations a considerable number of rats were killed and a large number found dead. Thorough fumigation was practiced and the premises washed down thoroughly with tank oil emulsion for the purpose of killing fleas. This work was intensive and so far as is known the only rats that escaped from the original focus were the one which evidently passed through the opening in the wall and entered the yard at 163 Dryades Street, and the one which crossed the street to 200 South Rampart Street. Two guinea pigs were placed in the premises at 1017 South Common Street after the fumigation of the premises. One contracted plague and died. The place was refumigated. Guinea pig controls at 160 and 162 South Rampart Street, and further controls at 1017 Common Street, did not contract the disease. No infected rats were found at this focus after October 6, 1914.

One human case is attributable to this focus. This occurred in the person of one Ching Yu, a Chinese laundryman living at 1120 Tulane Avenue, within half a block of this focus. He was in the habit of taking his meals at the Chinese restaurant and was taken sick on September 30, 1914, 14 days after the discovery of the first infected rat at 160 South Rampart Street.

The ramshackle frame building which was occupied as a restaurant has been replaced with a rat-proof brick building.

Passed Asst. Surg. R. A. Kearny has supplied much of the data used in preparing this note.